NBII Metadata Training Workshops

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The National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) is a cooperative effort coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) that is dedicated to increasing access to biological data and information. One way to measure NBII success is by the ease with which users can identify and share the biological data and information products maintained by the USGS and our partners in federal, state, and local government agencies; private sector organizations; and other organizations around the nation and the world.

Through the NBII Clearinghouse, Internet users can search through a wide assortment of standardized descriptions, or metadata, of biological databases and information products to identify those that meet their requirements. These metadata concisely convey such things as subject matter; how, when, where, and by whom the data were collected; how to access the database or information product; and person(s) to contact for more information.

For the most effective searching and retrieval of information from the NBII Clearinghouse, the metadata must be created according to established guidelines. The USGS offers NBII metadata training workshops to ensure metadata creators are familiar with

basic concepts related to creating metadata. Workshops provide an opportunity to: create metadata through hands-on exercises, prepare metadata files to be served on the Clearinghouse, and retrieve metadata records from the Clearinghouse.

NBII metadata workshops use the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Biological Data Profile, which incorporates all elements of

the FGDC Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata and adds elements that specifically describe biological data. The NBII currently uses Intergraph's SMMS metadata creation tool for NBII workshops. Other tools may be arranged.

NBII metadata workshops normally cover eight topics. Here are summaries of each:

Metadata and Clearinghouse Concepts: Covers basic information about metadata and clearinghouses, how they are used, and their benefits. Also introduces the NBII Biological Metadata Profile and the FGDC Metadata Standard.

NBII/FGDC Metadata Structure: Introduces the 10 sections of the NBII/FGDC metadata standard; templates; elements and hierarchical structure; domain information; and mandatory, mandatory if applicable, and optional elements.

Metadata Tool Operation: This optional topic familiarizes attendees with a metadata creation tool. Tool options include SMMS, TKME, and others.

NBII/FGDC Metadata Content: Provides an in-depth look at each section of the NBII/FGDC metadata standard using sample data sets and entering metadata information into SMMS.

CNS (Chew-N-Spit) Operation: (Depending on the metadata tool selected for the workshop, Chew-N-Spit may not be included in the workshop.) CNS pre-parses the ASCII text file generated by the metadata creation tool. The attendees learn to read the associated error files, make corrections, and verify a clean metadata record.

MP (Metadata Parser) Operation: Describes how to run MP, read the leftovers file, correct omissions and other errors, and generate output files for serving on the Internet or Clearinghouse.

Clearinghouse Use: Describes the NBII Clearinghouse and the National Spatial Data Infrastructure Clearinghouse. Participants gain insights on serving, locating, and retrieving Clearinghouse metadata records.

Metadata Development, Consistency, and Implementation: Participants refine and strengthen their newly acquired skills. Case study approach provides key concepts that help ensure the quality of an organization's metadata. Metadata creation program implementation discussions conclude the workshop.

The workshop's host site normally provides local logistical assistance, including: confirming the training room and computers and assisting with participant recruitment and workshop registration. Typically, workshop participants are not charged for attending the workshop or any materials distributed during the class.

The benefiting office covers all travel expenses for the trainer(s). Expenses include, if applicable: airfare, ground transportation, parking, lodging, and per diem (as established by the U.S. General Services Administration). The trainer's salary may be covered by the trainer's employing office. In the case of independent/contract trainers, salaries are covered by the benefiting office. All workshop materials are provided by the NBII.

NBII metadata training workshops are open to all federal, state, and local agencies; museums; universities; private organizations; and other potential data sharers. The workshops are conducted at locations across the country, based on participant interests and requirements. The workshops usually take two days, but condensed workshops are also possible.

Interested participants are encouraged to contact the NBII metadata training workshop coordinator for information about upcoming NBII workshops or possibilities for tailoring a workshop to your office or agency needs.

If you have any questions or would like more information about NBII Metadata Training Workshops, please contact:

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